

Heaven in Your Home: The Role and Responsibilities of Children & Parents

Ephesians 6:1-4

INTRODUCTION

Babies do not come with instruction manuals tied to their ankles. New parents anticipate the birth of their baby, welcoming the little bundle of joy with great delight. This bundle of joy has a unique personality with temperament, disposition, and desires bent in distinct directions and they often don't coincide with the parents' personalities – temperament, disposition and desires.

To add to the matter, just so that we don't forget about it, that baby has a natural bent to sin. While the parents might have given the baby blue eyes instead of brown and blonde hair instead of red, one thing every parent passes along to every child is certain—a sinful nature. The same psalmist who declared, *“For I am fearfully and wonderfully made,”* also said, *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me”* (Ps. 139:14; 51:5). And there's no contradiction between them. We're made in God's image as our first parents but just as their story exposes, we follow after them with that same nature twisted, corrupted, and turned toward sin (Gen 1:26–27; 3:1ff.). But it's not just the baby in the home; it's the parents as well.

So, with that background, we're to bring up (or raise) our children in a particular way and our children are to gladly submit to our authority. But it usually does not work out quite that easily. **Sin rears its ugly head in both parents and children.** We need more than helpful hints on parenting and living as children in the home. We need the Spirit of God to control us. **The effects of the Christian living in the Spirit's fullness include the home.** What we see is that our homes are not simply factories for producing morally acceptable and ethically commendable kids. They are a place where the implications of the gospel and our life in Christ are worked out so that Christ reigns in our homes. How do we apply the gospel and truths of the Christian life to the family?

I. Family goals for _____ (6:1-2)

A. The _____: _____ to parents
(6:1)

The word **'obey'** isn't a difficult word to understand. It involves **three things – listening to some specific instruction, understanding that instruction, and carrying out that instruction.** So, when Paul says children **OBEY** your parents, he means that when your parents tell you to do something, you are to listen to them and having understood what it is they want you to do, you are to do it.

Disobedience to parents is not just a matter of getting into trouble with them and facing a loss of privilege or some other punishment. It's a matter of ultimately answering to God.

B. The _____: _____ parents
(6:2)

How can you honor your parents?

- Honor them _____.
- Honor them _____.
- Honor them _____.

II. Family goals for _____ (6:3-4)

Parenting is a two-way street. It involves children obeying and honoring, but it also involves parents doing their part.

One observation before getting to the **specifics: Paul addresses fathers, by which he probably means parents, by which he definitely means fathers.**

The Holy Spirit intentionally moved Paul to directly address fathers for a specific reason. Here it is: **What both mothers and fathers do, fathers are responsible for.**

As it relates to parenting, two ideas emerge from these verses:

A. The _____ - _____ the wrong way to parenting: exasperation (6:3)

I can think of some common ways that parents can exasperate their children:

1. We _____

2. We show _____.

3. We set _____ goals.

4. We _____.

5. We _____.

6. We discipline _____.

B. The _____ - _____ the right way to parenting: _____ **God-given authority toward Christ-centered _____ (6:4)**

Let me remind you of an important truth:

A biblical worldview of parenting recognizes that children are a _____ from the Lord (Psalm 127:3) and parents are _____ for passing on what they know about the Lord, His _____, His _____, and His _____ to the next generation so that they come to _____ (believe) in Him (Psalm 78:7). A biblical worldview of parenting not only places importance in rearing children that become productive _____ of society and are ready for life in general, it also places ultimate importance in preparing them for _____. The goal is not to only prepare them for _____ day but ultimately for _____ (Acts 17:31; Revelation 20: 11-15).

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? **Children and parents have responsibilities to show a watching world what it means for sinners to know Christ and to live together by the grace of God.** We can only do that by the Spirit's power. We're far too weak, far too inclined to sin to carry out the letter and spirit of these goals for the family. But the Spirit enables weak people who rely upon Christ. What are your goals as a family? Children – obey and honor. Parents – do not provoke but nurture, train (discipline) and instruct in ways that prepare our children for the here and now and for the life to come. Amen?